TOUR CODE

EG6

ADVENTURESABROAD

EGYPT & KENYA

21 days

Updated 29/04/2013

Day 1 *Arrive in Cairo*

Today we arrive in Cairo; transfer to our hotel.

Al-Qahira, literally "The Vanquisher" or "The Conqueror", is the capital of Egypt and the second largest city in the Muslim World, the Arab world and Africa and the 16th largest metropolitan area in the world. Nicknamed "The City of a Thousand Minarets" for its preponderance of Islamic architecture, Cairo has long been a centre of the region's political and cultural life.

Overnight in Cairo. Meal plan: Dinner, if required.

Day 2 *Cairo: Memphis & Saqqara, Great Pyramids & the Sphinx*

This morning we travel to Memphis and Saqqara, chronologically the two most important sites in all of Egypt. Memphis was the capital of Egypt during the Old Kingdom (ca 2700-2180 BC), and Saqqara was used as a burial place for residents of Memphis including kings, princes and nobles. Our drive this morning takes us past some small, colourful villages and plantations in the fertile Nile Valley. At the ancient city of Memphis we will see several statues in a garden-like setting, including the colossal statue of Rameses the Great.

From Memphis we travel a short distance to Saqqara, the ancient burial site. On the site, considered by many archaeologists to be one of the world's most important excavations, is the Step Pyramid, constructed by Imhotep in the 27th century BC. The pyramid began as a simple mastaba, or long, flat tomb building. Over the course of time, Imhotep added to this mastaba five times -- the pyramid eventually measured 62m (203 feet) in height!

After lunch we pay a visit to the Great Pyramids and the Sphinx. Impressive in their grandeur, the pyramids are estimated to have been constructed over a period of 20 years using more than 100,000 labourers each year. The Great Pyramid of Cheops, constructed from over two million stone blocks, is 135m (443 feet) high! You may enter one of the pyramids through a long, narrow passageway and explore the deep inner chambers (extra fee applicable - ask your Tour Leader).

Later we visit the Sphinx. This feline-human was named by the Greeks because it resembled the mythical winged monster with a woman's head and lion's body. Legend has it that this "Sphinx" proposed a riddle to the Thebans and killed all who could not guess the correct answer! The Sphinx was carved from one solid piece of limestone and measures 50m (164 feet) in length and 22m (72 feet) in height.

Overnight in Cairo. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 3 *Cairo - Alexandria - Cairo*

Early this morning we travel from Cairo to Alexandria. The second largest city in Egypt, known as "The Pearl of the

Mediterranean", has an atmosphere that is more Mediterranean than Middle Eastern; its ambience and cultural heritage distance it from the rest of the country although it is actually only 225 km from Cairo (3-4 hours, depending on traffic).

We head to the southwest of the city and a hill littered with the remains of ancient walls, architectural fragments and rubble on which stands Alexandria's largest ancient monument, Pompey's Pillar, rising from the ruins of the ancient and famous Serapeion (Temple of Serapis). This column of red Aswan granite with a Corinthian capital, standing on a badly ruined substructure and rising to a height of almost 90ft / 27m, is traditionally believed to have been erected by the Emperor Theodosius.

We also visit the Roman Catacombs, the last existing major construction for the sake of the old Egyptian religion. Though the funerary motifs are pure ancient Egyptian, the architects and artists were schooled in the Graeco-Roman style. Applied to the themes of Ancient Egyptian religion, it has resulted in an amazing integrated art, quite unlike anything else in the world.

Another highlight today is a visit to Bibliotheca Alexandria. Once the greatest library in the ancient world, the Bibliotheca is dedicated to "the writings of all nations." Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the modern Bibliotheka cost some USD150 million, all by donation from Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Iraq.

We return to Cairo in time for dinner.

Overnight in Cairo. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 4 *Cairo - Aswan & Felucca Sailing*

Early this morning we fly from Cairo to Aswan in Upper Egypt.*

Upon arrival we have a leisurely sail on a felucca, a traditional sailing vessel used for centuries for carrying goods and passengers along the Nile.

* NOTE: The actual order of our Aswan area sightseeing may vary depending on incoming flight schedules and other logisitical considerations.

Overnight in Aswan. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 5 *Aswan: Abu Simbel & Philae Temple*

Early this morning we travel by road (3 hours, each way) from Aswan across the Western Desert to Nubia, or the "Land of the Gold". Our destination this morning is the impressive Abu Simbel -- the imposing rock temples of Rameses II and his queen, Nefertari.

We have a guided tour of this site, including the interior of the colossal temples. The Temple of Rameses II, with its immense statues of the Pharaoh seated on his throne, is one of the classic images of the power of the Pharaohs. Inside the temple you will see well-preserved wall decorations and several murals. There is a wonderful relief of Rameses presenting captives to various gods, including himself! We also gain insight into the reconstruction process by visiting the interior of the artificial mountain.

We travel back to Aswan making a brief stop at the High Dam en route. Constructed between 1960 and 1971, the High Dam collects and stores water over a number of years so that the annual Nile flood can be controlled. We will have a panoramic view of Aswan to the north and Lake Nasser to the south.

This evening we will attend the Sound & Light Show at Philae Temple. The temple is situated on an island, and we have to take a boat to get to the site. It is a good idea to have a small flashlight with you.

Overnight in Aswan. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 6 *Aswan: San Simeon & Nile Cruise Embarkation*

This morning we will travel by small boat across the River Nile to the west bank. From here we travel by camel across the sandy desert to the Christian Monastery of St Simeon. Before we begin this easy trek our Tour Leader and camel trainer will teach you the technique of riding a camel. This is a journey that can be undertaken by anyone at any age (one rider per camel). Our trek is about 45 minutes to the monastery, and then 15 minutes back to the riverbank. Those who prefer not to ride can stay with the boat and rejoin the camel riders for our trip to Kitchener's Island.

Dating from the 6th century, and in use until the 13th century, the Monastery of St Simeon is one of the best preserved Christian sites in Egypt. Inside we will see the chapel, living quarters, kitchen and dining areas, wine press, bake area and storerooms. On our tour we will also see the remains of some Coptic frescoes -- depictions of Christ and saints as well as many geometric patterns.

From here we board our boat and ride among the islands dotting the Nile. Up the hill, above the river, is the Mausoleum of the Aga Khan, spiritual leader of the Ismailis, a Shi'ite sect based principally in India but with followers around the world. The tomb is an elegant pink granite structure of late 1950 origin.

The main island is called Elephantine Island because many of the rocks look like elephants bathing in the Nile. We will arrive at the beautiful Kitchener's Island where we will have time to stroll through the rich botanical gardens with trees, plants, and bushes.

At around midday we board our Nile cruise vessel and enjoy lunch on board. This afternoon you have a choice between a free afternoon either on board the ship (which will remain docked in Aswan until tomorrow), or in the town of Aswan, OR you can join the ship's sightseeing programme. This sightseeing will likely include the 'Unfinished Obelisk', the High Dam (already seen), and Philae temple, also already visited, but some passengers enjoy seeing it again during daylight hours.

Overnight on Nile cruise. NTS cruise (or similar). Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 7 *Nile Cruise: Kom Ombo & Edfu*

We will make a stop and visit the Temple of Kom Ombo. In ancient times, Kom Ombo was strategically important as a trading town on the caravan route from Nubia to Cairo. Kom Ombo, actually two temples in one, is dedicated dually to Haroeris and Sobek, respectively the god of the sky and the crocodile-headed god. Here we are able to see the remains of a mummified crocodile. Crocodiles no longer exist in the Egyptian part of the River Nile, but in Pharaonic times they lived here in great numbers and were worshipped as gods!

From Kom Ombo we continue along the River Nile toward Edfu. As the largest and most completely preserved Pharaonic temple, albeit Greek-built, Edfu is dedicated to the god Horus. Construction of this temple began under Ptolemy III Euergetes I in 237 BC. We will allow time to explore this massive and impressive site, enclosed by walls and flanked by two large pylon gateways. Here we will also be able to see a Nilometer -- an ancient technique of measuring the Nile's water fluctuations and setting the level of taxes.

Overnight on Nile cruise. NTS cruise (or similar). Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 8 *Nile Cruise: Luxor Temple*

Overnight or early this morning we will have arrived at Luxor.

Today we visit Luxor Temple. The temple was dedicated to the Theban Triad of Amun, Mut, and Chons and was built during the New Kingdom, the focus of the annual Opet Festival, in which a cult statue of Amun was paraded down the Nile from nearby Karnak Temple to stay there for a while, with his consort Mut, in a celebration of fertility. Luxor temple is considered one of the largest ancient Egyptian temple complexes situated on the eastern bank of the river Nile. At the entrance is a huge tower built by King Ramses II.

Overnight on Nile cruise (docked at Luxor). NTS cruise (or similar). Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 9 *Luxor: Cruise Disembarkation & Valley of the Queens*

Today we disembark our cruise and move to our hotel in Luxor.

This morning we make an excursion the Valley of the Queens.* After crossing the Nile we will board our bus for the short journey to visit this wonderful necropolis on the western shore of the Nile.

The Valley of the Queens was used as a burial site for the royal women of the 18th, 19th and 20th Dynasties. Ancient Egyptians called this place "Set Neferu" meaning Seat Of Beauty, and today only a few of the eighty tombs are open to the public. We will visit 3 tombs. The Valley of the Queens holds far more than graves of queens.

As well as our visit to the Valley of the Queens we will also have a guided tour of the workers' village and the Madinat Habu temple. Madinat Habu, also known as the temple of Rameses III was known in ancient times as Djanet, and according to ancient belief, was the place were Amon first appeared. Both Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III built a temple dedicated to Amon here, and later Rameses III constructed his larger memorial temple on the site.

* Due to periodic and unannounced closures of the tombs at the Valley of the Queens, your Tour Leader may substitute the Tombs of the Nobles, which may be of more interest.

Overnight in Luxor. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 10 *Luxor: Valley of the Kings*

Early this morning we cross the River Nile by boat to the West Bank where the wealth of antiquities is outstanding. On the other side we will meet our transport for our excursion into the Valley of the Kings.

We will accomplish part of our journey today by donkey. We'll "saddle-up" and begin a leisurely ride through the New Gourna Village and into the countryside. Avoiding the busier road, we will witness quiet village life along the way for about 40-45 minutes before re-uniting with our road transport for the final leg into the Valley of the Kings.

Once in the isolated valley, dominated by large pyramid-shaped mountains, we will have a guided tour of three of the many tombs that are here. The valley was the burial ground for kings throughout the New Kingdom. Note that some of the tombs have steep stairways and all are quite dark inside (you might find a pocket flashlight useful).

We then proceed to the funerary temple of Queen Hatshepsut -- the first woman to rule as pharaoh! We have a tour of this impressive complex, discovered in the mid-19th century and still under restoration.

After our tour we return by minibus through the countryside back to the river and the East Bank.

Tonight you may choose to visit the Sound and Light show at Karnak Temple (optional).

Overnight in Luxor. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 11 *Luxor: Karnak Temple*

This morning we visit one of the most fantastic archaeological sites in the world: Karnak Temple.

Karnak was built, added to, dismantled, restored, enlarged and decorated during its colourful history of over 1,500 years. At certain points in Egyptian history, this temple was the most important in all of Egypt. When we arrive at the temple you will be awed by the grandeur of the tremendous pylon gateway and the Avenue of 1,000 Sphinxes that originally ran all the way to the Nile and Luxor Temple! We will have a guided tour of the complex, massive by any standard.

During free time this afternoon, we suggest a visit to the excellent Luxor Museum.

Overnight in Luxor. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 12 *Luxor - Cairo, Egypt - Overnight Flight to Kenya*

This morning we fly to Cairo and proceed to the famous Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, where we see some of Egypt's most beloved treasures. Among the 100,000 pieces housed on the museum's two floors is the famous exhibit of Tutankhamun whose tomb was discovered by Howard Carter in 1922. The tomb and treasures of this young Pharaoh, modest by Pharaonic Egyptian standards, is perhaps the best preserved of the discovered tombs. We also see archaeological relics from the Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, New Kingdom and Greco-Roman periods. Our tour today is fully guided by our English-speaking guide. We also allow some time for you to explore the treasures on your own (Mummies Room: approx US $10 extra cost).

We then proceed to Islamic Cairo where we will tour the Citadel, begun by Saladin in the 12th century. Today the Citadel's buildings are mainly from the Ottoman period, and are truly grand. From the Citadel, actually a complex of three mosques and four museums, we enjoy an amazing view of Cairo spread beneath the hilltop. Here we will see the fabulous Mosque of Mohammed Ali, also known as the "Alabaster Mosque."

Later this evening we fly to Nairobi,* arriving the following morning (dinner on flight).

* NOTE: This flight is NOT included in the Land Price. Call us for an all inclusive air price from your town or city. Our air prices are based on a routing with KLM / NW Airlines.

Overnight flight to Nairobi. Meal plan: Breakfast and lunch.

Day 13 *Arrival in Nairobi, Kenya*

Today we arrive in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya.

Part of Maasai land when the British arrived, this modern capital grew with the development of the railway. Derived from a Maasai word meaning "Cold Water," Nairobi is a pleasant mix of colonial British with modern and traditional African influences. This evening we enjoy dinner at the famous Tamarind Restaurant.

Overnight in Nairobi. Nairobi Hilton (or similar). Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 14 *Nairobi - Ol Pejeta Conservancy*

Today we travel from Nairobi, through the "White Highlands," so called because of the large number of Europeans who settled here, northwards to the lower slopes of Mt Kenya, rising to 5199 m (16,728 feet), Africa's second highest peak. Our drive will take us into the Central Highlands, the heartland of the Kikuyu people. This is a very fertile region, well-watered, intensively cultivated, and thickly forested. The land was coveted by the Europeans who began arriving in ever-increasing numbers once the railway through the area was completed. The settlers established coffee and tea plantations on the eastern slopes of Mt Kenya and cultivated wheat on the western slopes.

Our destination is Sweetwaters, a luxury tented camp clustered around a water hole and set in the pristine calm of the private Ol Pejeta Conservancy, a non-profit organization supporting endangered species, tourism and community outreach. Ol Pejeta is East Africa's largest Black Rhino sanctuary, the only place in Kenya to see chimpanzees, and holds some of the highest predator densities in Kenya.

This afternoon we'll enjoy our first game drive within the conservancy.

Overnight at Sweetwaters Camp. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 15 *Ol Pejeta Conservancy*

Ol Pejeta is a mosaic of grass plains, wooded grassland, acacia woodland and evergreen thicket extending for over 350 square kilometers. The conservancy boasts an astounding variety of animals, including the "Big Five."

We will have morning and afternoon game drives today, as well as a chance to visit the Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary -- the only place in Kenya where this highly endangered and remarkably intelligent species can be seen. The facility was initially established to receive and provide lifelong refuge to orphaned and abused chimpanzees from West and Central Africa. Here the chimpanzees are carefully nursed back to health so they can enjoy the rest of their days in the safety of a vast natural enclosure.

Overnight at Sweetwaters Camp. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 16 *Ol Pejeta - Great Rift Valley - Lake Nakuru National Park*

This morning we travel to Lake Nakuru, a shallow soda lake in the Rift Valley. The Rift Valley was created millions of years ago under the strain of enormous volcanic eruptions which resulted in a giant split in the earth's surface from Syria to Mozambique. Lava flowed into the valley, forming escarpments on either side of the gigantic trough which can be up to 80 km (50 miles) wide, big enough to be visible from space. At the lake, depending on the water levels, we may have the opportunity to see up to two million flamingos, in addition to the over 340 species of birds that have been recorded in the Rift Valley!

Lake Nakuru is very shallow and can fluctuate up to five metres (12 feet) each day. When the water is low, you can see

a white band of crystallized soda along the shoreline. This is also one of the best places in Kenya to view the rare White Rhino as we explore the park on our afternoon game drive.

Overnight in Lake Nakuru National Park. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 17 *Lake Nakuru - Maasai Mara National Reserve*

Early this morning we depart from Lake Nakuru National Park and continue our journey through the Rift Valley, passing by Lake Naivasha and nearby Mount Longonot, a relatively young volcanic reminder of the Rift's violent past. We arrive at our lodge (via bad road) in the Maasai Mara National Reserve in time for lunch.

The Maasai Mara is a natural extension of the Serengeti eco-system and has an amazing concentration of wildlife. The largest population of lions in Kenya is found here, along with large herds of plains game. The Maasai Mara may also be the best place in Kenya to view cheetah. Later this afternoon we enjoy another game drive.

Overnight in the Maasai Mara. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 18 *Maasai Mara National Reserve*

The Maasai Mara National Reserve consists of rolling grassland and is located at the northern end of the Serengeti Plain. Considered the best of Kenya's parks, it is on the pathway of the yearly wildebeest migration, which comes north from Tanzania about the end of June and returns to Tanzania around the end of September. "The Mara" sustains all of the "Big Five" -- lion, elephant, leopard, rhinoceros and buffalo -- as well as an astonishing wealth of herding animals and other wildlife. You can see the stately Maasai men and youth along the road tending their cattle and goats.

We have a full day in the reserve, with morning and afternoon game drives.

In the Mara you will also have an optional opportunity to ascend over the northern Serengeti at daybreak in a hot air balloon (optional expense). From over 300 m (984 feet) above, you will be able to view the vast land and the myriad animals that inhabit the Maasai Mara.

Overnight in the Maasai Mara National Reserve. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 19 *Maasai Mara National Reserve*

We enjoy another full day with game viewing in Maasai Mara. Depending on the season and current game locations and viewing conditions, we may divide our day into morning and afternoon drives, or take our lunches with us in order to venture further into the reserve if conditions warrant.

Overnight in the Maasai Mara National Reserve. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 20 *Maasai Mara - Nairobi*

After breakfast we depart for Nairobi. En route, just outside the capital, we visit the Karen Blixen Museum. Baroness Karen Blixen-Finecke emigrated from Denmark to Kenya in 1918 and, in 1937, wrote under the pseudonym, Isaac Dineson, "Out of Africa." The novel tells the tale of the Baroness's experiences on a Kenyan farm. Her home is now a museum, restored to the style in which she maintained it.

Overnight in Nairobi. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 21 *Departure*

Departure from Nairobi.

SAFIRI SALAAMA! Meal plan: Breakfast.